



Kentucky's War of 1812: Olympian Springs

The Kentucky Historical Society's historical marker 1342 in Bath County commemorates the site of Olympian Springs, a famous resort and War of 1812 camp site.

Originally known as Mud Lick Springs, the springs' supposed medicinal properties made it a popular site. In the early 19th-century, the area was purchased by Col. Thomas Hart, Henry Clay's father-in-law. Col. Hart built a hotel, changed the name to Olympian Springs and promoted the site's health benefits. As the number of visitors increased, so, too, did the need for better transportation, and in 1803, the first stagecoach route in Kentucky was established between the springs and Lexington. One legend holds that Henry Clay owned and then lost the springs during a poker game.

During the War of 1812, the 28th United States Infantry Regiment camped at the site. In 1833, as cholera ravaged central Kentucky, many Lexington residents visited Olympian Springs to escape the disease. The resort's popularity ultimately declined, and by the mid-1940s it was used for farmland.

Image courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.